

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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CINCUSNAVEUR

USCINCEUR

CINCUSAREUR

CINCUSAFE

USDOCOSOUTH

USNMR SHAPE

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 1889

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MORG, GR

SUBJ: ADDITIONAL CHANGES WITHIN FLAG RANKS OF GREEK ARMED FORCES
ANNOUNCED

REF: ATHENS 1798

1. SUMMARY: MINISTRY DEFENSE ANNOUNCEMENT MARCH 6
DETAILED FURTHER CHANGES WITHIN FLAG RANKS OF LEADERSHIP
GREEK ARMED FORCES. WITHIN ARMY, 14 ADDITIONAL MAJOR
GENERALS AND 12 MORE BRIGADIER GENERALS HAVE BEEN RETIRED.
AIR FORCE LOST 2 MAJOR GENERALS AND 8 BRIGADIER GENERALS
THROUGH RETIREMENT, WHILE IN CASE OF NAVY 4 COMMODORES
RETIRED. IN COURSE THIS SECOND STAGE OF FLAG RANK REVIEW,
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IT APPEARS GOG HAS SELECTED A NUMBER OF OFFICERS FOR

RETIREMENT SPECIFICALLY IN PURSUANCE OF ITS PREVIOUSLY STATED GOAL OF "CLEANSING" ARMED FORCES OF JUNTA REMNANTS. THUS TO SOME DEGREE THERE APPEARS TO BE A MORE SIGNIFICANT "POLITICAL ELEMENT" IN THIS GROUP OF RETIREMENTS THAN WAS PRESENT IN FIRST GROUP REPORTED REFTEL. END SUMMARY.

2. EVENING MARCH 6, MINISTRY NATIONAL DEFENSE ANNOUNCED THAT SUPREME COUNCIL OF ARMED FORCES HAD COMPLETED ITS CONSIDERATION OF SENIOR OFFICERS OF THE THREE ARMED SERVICES AND HAD DECIDED TO EFFECT RETIREMENTS AND PROMOTIONS IN ADDITION TO THOSE ANNOUNCED MARCH 4 (REFTEL). ANNOUNCEMENT REVEALED THAT WITHIN ARMY, ONE MAJOR GENERAL HAD BEEN PROMOTED TO LIEUTENANT GENERAL AND THAT 14 MAJOR GENERALS HAD BEEN RETIRED. ALSO 16 BRIGADIER GENERALS WERE PROMOTED TO MAJOR GENERAL RANK AND 12 BRIGADIER GENERALS WERE RETIRED. WITHIN AIR FORCE, DEFMIN ANNOUNCEMENT REPORTED RETIREMENT OF 2 MAJOR GENERALS AND 8 BRIGADIER GENERALS. WITHIN NAVY, 4 COMMODORES WERE RETIRED. FINALLY, MINISTRY OF DEFENSE REPORTED THAT THREE MAJORS AND 2 LT. COLONELS, WHO HAD LEFT ARMY DUE "TO THEIR OPPOSITION TO DICTATORIAL REGIME," HAD BEEN REINSTATED AND THE MAJORS PROMOTED TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

3. WHILE ONLY LITTLE OF "CLEANSING" ELEMENT WAS PERCEIVED IN ORIGINAL GROUP OF RETIREMENTS ANNOUNCED MARCH 4, CURRENT GROUP INCLUDES SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF OFFICERS WHO WERE QUITE CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH JUNTA. BOTH WITHIN MAJOR GENERAL AND BRIGADIER GENERAL RANKS OF ARMY, APPROXIMATELY ONE DOZEN OFFICERS WERE FORCED INTO RETIREMENT FOR REASONS NOT CONNECTED WITH BUREAUCRATIC NECESSITY. (COMMENT: UNDER ARMY REGULATIONS AN OFFICER MUST RETIRE IF ONE JUNIOR TO HIM IS PROMOTED ABOVE HIM.) IT APPEARS LIKELY THAT BULK THIS LATTER GROUP OFFICERS WAS OUSTED BECAUSE OF KNOWN CLOSE TIES WITH FORMER JUNTA.

4. WITHIN HELLENIC AIR FORCE (HAF) BOTH MAJOR GENERALS RETIRED BY DEFMIN DECREE WERE KNOWN AS JUNTA OFFICERS, WHILE AT LEAST 4 OF THE BRIGADIER GENERALS RETIRED BY DEFMIN WERE ALSO CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH JUNTA. IN FACT, EMBASSY AIR ATTACHE OF OPINION THAT ALMOST ALL FLAG RANK OFFICERS WITHIN HAF
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PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS HAVING CLOSE JUNTA TIES WERE RETIRED IN THIS LATEST REVIEW. IN NAVY, OF 4 COMMODORES LEAVING THE SERVICE, ONE WAS JUNTA ASSOCIATED WHILE THE OTHER THREE WERE STAFF OFFICERS.

5. IT THUS SEEMS THAT GOVERNMENT HAS NOW DECIDED TO TAKE THE HARD POLITICAL DECISION TO GO AFTER MANY OF THE WELL-KNOWN JUNTA ASSOCIATED OFFICERS. THIS WAS NOT

EVIDENT AT TIME INITIAL GROUP RETIREMENTS MADE KNOWN MARCH 4 (REFTEL) SINCE IT WAS NOT PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED THAT THERE WOULD BE A SECOND PHASE OF FLAG OFFICER REVIEW WITHIN ARMY. (NOTE: DEFATT OFFICERS DO NOT REMEMBER SUCH A SECOND STAGE REVIEW EVER HAVING BEEN HELD PREVIOUSLY.) ALSO, DEFATT VIEWS DEFMIN DECISION TO RETIRE FLAG RANK OFFICERS FOR OTHER THAN TRADITIONAL ONES (E.G., A) COMPLETION 35 YEARS SERVICE, (B) FOR CAUSE, (C) AT OWN REQUEST, (D) "JUMPED OVER" BY JUNIOR) AS EXCEPTIONAL ACT. THIS FURTHER TENDS TO SUPPORT VIEW THAT POLITICAL ELEMENT (E.G. "CLEANSING") PREVAILED IN MOST SUCH CASES.

6. MORNING PRESS MARCH 7 PLAYS UP "ROUND TWO" OF FLAG RANK REVIEW AS CHIEF STORY. ALL EXPRESS PLEASURE AT CLEANSING ASPECT AND FACT THAT ARMED FORCES QUALITY IMPROVED THEREBY. RIZOSPASTIC (COMMUNIST PARTY - EXTERIOR) CARRIES EDITORIAL WITH THEME THAT STEPS ARE "POSITIVE BUT INSUFFICIENT." EDITORIAL STATES THAT "ROOT OF EVIL" STILL REMAINS, I.E. AS PERSONIFIED BY CONTINUED PRESENCE U.S. MILITARY MISSION AND VARIOUS NATO OFFICES IN GREECE.

7. NOW THAT GOVERNMENT INTENTION TO CARRY THROUGH SUBSTANTIALLY ON ITS PLEDGE TO CONDUCT CLEANSING IN ARMED FORCES IS APPARENT, IT LIKELY THAT DEGREE OF REAL CONSTERNATION NOW BEING FELT IN FIELD GRADE RANKS OF ARMED FORCES. GOVERNMENT HAS ANNOUNCED THAT IT WOULD QUICKLY MOVE TOWARD COMPLETE REVIEW (INCLUDING LOYALTY CRITERIA) OF ALL OFFICERS' FILES AND ACCORDINGLY, ALL OFFICERS TAINTED BY JUNTA ASSOCIATION UNDOUBTEDLY FEARFUL AXE WILL FALL ON THEM IN NEAR FUTURE. WHILE GOVERNMENT HAS GAINED IN POLITICAL SENSE BY REDEEMING ITS COMMITMENT TO PEOPLE CONCERNING ARMED FORCES CATHARSIS, IT MUST STILL MAINTAIN CLOSE WATCH OVER UNIFORMED SERVICES IN EVENT THAT DECISIONS ALREADY TAKEN MIGHT PROVOKE
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REACTION FROM REMAINING OFFICERS DUE TO ANXIETY AND OR UNCERTAINTY.

8. DEFATT WILL REPORT SEPARATELY.
STEARNS

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